

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028998

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ECUADOREANS UP IN ARMS OVER VETO OF KFIR SALE

EMBASSY QUITO REPORTS THAT ECUADOREAN OFFICIALS ARE FURIOUS OVER THE US VETO OF ISRAEL'S PLAN TO SELL THEM THE KFIR JET FIGHTER. ECUADOREAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS BOYCOTTED A FEBRUARY 7 DINNER AT THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE IN HONOR OF THE VISITING US ARMY CHIEF OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE, AND DEFENSE MINISTER ARRATA, WHO ATTENDED, PRONOUNCED HIMSELF "STUNNED" BY THE US ACTION. SECRETARY GENERAL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION GARCES SAID THE ACQUISITION OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT HELD THE HIGHEST SECURITY PRIORITY FOR THE GOE, AND IT WOULD NOW
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OBTAIN THEM WHEREVER IT COULD, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION. UNDER SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AYALA TOLD OUR DCM THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAD NOT BEEN KEPT INFORMED BY THE MILITARY OF THE DEVELOPING PROBLEM, BUT SAID HE AGREED THAT THE PURCHASE OF THE KFIRS WAS JUSTIFIED IN ECUADOR'S CASE BECAUSE OF ITS CLEAR DEFENSE NEED.

EMBASSY TEL AVIV, MEANWHILE, REPORTS THAT REACTION TO THE VETO IN ISRAEL WAS RELATIVELY RESTRAINED AND UNSENSATIONAL. (CONFIDENTIAL) QUITO 901 AND (UNCLASSIFIED) TEL AVIV 958, 2/8.)

2. UNITY ELUDING SOUTH AFRICAN MODERATES

EMBASSY CAPE TOWN REPORTS THAT A CAMPAIGN BY UNITED PARTY LEADER SIR DE VILLIERS GRAAF TO FORM AN EFFECTIVE NEW PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION IS MAKING LITTLE PROGRESS. EFFORTS TO FORM A UNITED FRONT BETWEEN THE UP AND THE SMALL, LIBERAL PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY HAVE STALLED, AND SIX CONSERVATIVE UP PARLIAMENTARIANS, MIFFED AT GRAAF'S PRAGMATIC OPENING TO THE LEFT, HAVE BEEN EXPELLED AND FORMED A NEW SPLINTER PARTY. THE EMBASSY CONCLUDES THAT:

--PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES IS LIKELY TO INCREASE, BUT REMAIN LIMITED.

--FURTHER SPLINTERING OF THE UP IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY, BUT THE PRP IS UNLIKELY TO BENEFIT SUFFICIENTLY TO BECOME THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION.

--WHETHER OR NOT LIBERALS AND MODERATES SUCCEED IN UNITING, THE DOMINANCE OF PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S CONSERVATIVE NATIONALIST PARTY IS UNLIKELY TO BE SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE) CAPE TOWN 171, 2/7.)

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3. HOPELESS, BUT NOT SERIOUS

QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA DE LA ROCHERE TOLD EMBASSY PARIS FEBRUARY 8 THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE WAS "HOPELESS" AS LONG AS BOKASSA REMAINS IN POWER AND SAID FRENCH OFFICIALS ADMINISTERING AID PROGRAMS TO AFRICA THROW UP THEIR HANDS AT THE MENTION OF THE CAE. NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID, FRANCE HAS NO INTENTION OF BREAKING WITH BANGUI. IT WILL ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE ITS POSITION FOR THE FUTURE BY MAINTAINING A LOW PROFILE AND DOING NOTHING TO ENCOURAGE A VISIT BY BOKASSA TO FRANCE.

EMBASSY COMMENT: FRANCE WOULD LIKE TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH AFRICAN REGIMES ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, BUT WISHES TO AVOID CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH BOKASSA'S REGIME, WHICH IS EMBARRASSING EVEN TO FRANCE'S BEST AFRICAN FRIENDS. (CONFIDENTIAL) PARIS 3955 (EXDIS), 2/8.)

4. NOT ANOTHER COD WAR

THE FCO'S DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MICHAEL BUTLER, WARNED EMBASSY LONDON FEBRUARY 7 THAT THE SOVIET UNION'S REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH EC FISHING REGULATIONS COULD LEAD TO AN AWKWARD CONFRONTATION. BUTLER SAID THE SOVIETS HAD REFUSED A REQUEST BY THE UK (ACTING AS EC

PRESIDENT) TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF THEIR TRAWLERS FISHING IN COMMUNITY WATERS, AND HAD WARNED THAT BRITAIN WOULD "HAVE TO FACE THE CONSEQUENCES" IF IT INTERFERED WITH RUSSIAN VESSELS IN ITS WATERS. THE BRITISH ARE TAKING STEPS TO INCORPORATE THE REGULATIONS INTO LAW AND TO ENFORCE THEM IF NECESSARY. HOWEVER, BUTLER SAID THE UK WOULD CONSULT WITH THE US AND OTHER NATO MEMBERS BEFORE MAKING ANY SEIZURES. (CONFIDENTIAL) LONDON 2218, 2/8.)
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